



Treasury Committee

House of Commons, Committee Office, London SW1A 0AA

Tel 020 7219 5769 Email treascom@parliament.uk Website www.parliament.uk/treascom

Angela MacDonald
Deputy Chief Executive and Second Permanent Secretary
HMRC
[via email]

13 June 2023

Dear Angela,

Closure of Self-Assessment helpline over summer months

On Thursday 8 June HMRC announced that a trial would take place in which the main Self-Assessment (SA) helpline would be closed between 12 June and 4 September 2023.¹

Given the potentially significant impact this may have on taxpayers, and the short notice with which this was announced, I would be grateful for responses to the following questions:

1. Please can you provide the Committee with monthly usage statistics for the SA helpline in the previous five years?
2. Did HMRC consult with any external body prior to the trial. If so, with whom? If not, why not?
3. What data will be collected from the trial? Will these include the number of calls displaced to other helplines?
4. How will HMRC evaluate the trial? What are the key metrics on which HMRC will measure its success? What data and evaluations of the trial will HMRC publish, with particular regard for customer service satisfaction levels?
5. What monitoring will take place after the trial to assess whether calls have been displaced from the closure months into later months when the helpline is reopened?
6. What procedures are in place to assist vulnerable taxpayers and those unable or unwilling to use digital services?
7. What contingency arrangements does HMRC have in place should taxpayer detriment be greater than expected during the trial?
8. Is the closure of the SA helpline in any way related to HMRC's homeworking policy?
9. Has the closure of the helpline been introduced because of staffing issues in HMRC or backlogs/issues in other areas?

In line with the Committee's usual practice, I will be placing this letter and your response in the public domain. I would be grateful for a reply by 27 June 2023.

With best wishes,

Harriett Baldwin MP
Chair of the Treasury Committee

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/hmrc-to-trial-seasonal-self-assessment-helpline--2>